

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
TO: <i>OEAA Front Office</i>		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
<div></div>		
REMARKS: <div><i>[Handwritten signature]</i> <i>[Handwritten signature]</i> <i>[Handwritten signature]</i></div>		
FROM: <i>CEA/SEA/ITB</i>		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
<div></div>	<i>HQS</i>	

SECRET

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

4 December 1981

IMPACT OF HERBICIDAL OPIUM ERADICATION IN BURMA

Burmese officials evidently have been considering a spray herbicidal opium eradication program, but they would be cautious in its implementation even with foreign assistance. Because of its potential for destroying other crops and for affecting the health of farmers, such a program could generate adverse publicity for the Ne Win regime and intensify ethnic hostility toward the government. [REDACTED]

25X1

Party Chairman Ne Win, nevertheless, remains concerned about the opium problem. Narcotics trafficking is a major source of income for insurgent groups, which pose a continuing, significant security threat. Rangoon is also concerned that Burma's role as a major opium producer harms the country's international image. [REDACTED]

25X1

Manual eradication and crop substitution programs already under way have had little impact on opium production in Burma. Only 25 tons of opium have been destroyed this year out of a record crop estimated at 550 tons. [REDACTED]

25X1

Extent and Areas of Eradication Program

Although Ne Win early last year reportedly approved a proposal to eradicate opium poppy fields with herbicides sprayed from aircraft, [REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED] we would expect, however, that a spray program would be initiated in the central part of the country, in southern Shan State, and in Kayah State. These areas, which contain large poppy fields, are not under insurgent control, and spray and spotter aircraft thus would be less likely to attract ground fire. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

*This memorandum was prepared by the Office of East Asian Analysis in response to a request by Assistant Secretary of State Dominick L. DiCarlo, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. Comments and queries may be addressed to Chief, Southeast Asia Division, Office of East Asian Analysis, [REDACTED]*

25X1

EA M 81-10027

SECRET

The government would be less willing at least initially, to undertake a spray program in the other areas of Shan State, even though at least four-fifths of Burmese opium is produced there. Most of these areas are under control of the Burmese Communist Party, the Shan State Army, or the Shan United Army, insurgent groups that are likely to use their ample supplies of small arms against intruding aircraft. Nor would Rangoon want to risk the ire of inhabitants in government-controlled areas, where manual eradication programs have some limited success in reducing opium production. [REDACTED]

25X1

#### Impact on Ethnic and Insurgent Groups

Any significant reduction in opium production would hurt both local farmers and insurgent groups. Opium is a traditional, high-profit crop, and farmers are reluctant to cultivate alternative crops such as coffee or tea. Government programs to encourage crop substitution so far have been largely ineffective. Moreover, herbicidal damage to the soil could affect crops cultivated during non-poppy seasons. [REDACTED]

25X1

If Rangoon should decide to spray fields under insurgent control, groups dependent on the income derived from opium production and trafficking would be hard hit. Many small, ethnic "independence" groups are essentially warlord armies engaged in smuggling activities. Deprivation of their chief source of income could lead to increased competition between groups for opium unaffected by herbicides, formation of new alliances, and increased antigovernment military activity. [REDACTED]

25X1

Larger, more established groups, would find it easier to survive. First, a spray program would be unlikely to destroy all fields under their control. Secondly, the 14,000-man Burmese Communist Party--Burma's number-one opium producer--and the 4,000-man Shan United Army, the chief trafficking group, probably could find alternative sources of income until old poppy fields were reestablished or new ones developed. Moreover, the Burmese Communist Party could appeal to the Chinese for temporary stepped-up support. [REDACTED]

25X1

The 5,000-man Shan State Army, on the other hand, is having difficulty battling both Rangoon and competing insurgent groups, and it is now facing severe food shortages. Elimination of even a small portion of its income could significantly weaken the group, perhaps forcing it to seek support from the Burmese Communist Party, with which it was once reluctantly allied. [REDACTED]

25X1

#### Potential for Propaganda Activity

Burmese insurgent and ethnic groups would try to exploit a spray program, focusing on health hazards, damage to fields, foreign involvement, and the government's failure to compensate

SECRET

SECRET

farmers or train them to grow alternative crops. Because of their involvement in trafficking, these groups receive little sympathy outside of Burma. Nevertheless, some traffickers--especially in the Shan United Army--have extensive contacts in the Thai military, and most major insurgent groups have bases in Thailand. They--or their military contacts--probably have connections with Thai journalists, who could make accusations that herbicides have harmed Burmese civilians. Such accusations would not only dampen Ne Win's enthusiasm for an eradication program but also undermine US attempts to publicize Communist use of lethal agents in Indochina. [REDACTED]

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

SUBJECT: Impact of Herbicidal Opium Eradication in Burma

Distribution

Original to Requestor

- 5 - OCO/IMB/CB
- 1 - EAA Front Office
- 1 - Chief, Southeast Asia Division
- 1 - PDB
- 1 - D/NIC
- 2 - D/NFAC
- 1 - Director, INR/EAP, Dept. of State
- 1 - EA/IMBS, Dept. of State
- 1 - Chrono

SECRET

Approved For Release 2007/04/27 : CIA-RDP03T02547R000

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
TO: Ch <del>Lee</del> / PO		10 Dec 81
	DWG	HQS.
REMARKS:		
?		
FROM: DE A/C E/T		
	BUILDING	
	HQS.	

FORM NO. 241  
1 FEB 55

**REPLACES FORM 36-8  
WHICH MAY BE USED.**

(47)

**Page Denied**

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied